

**HAPPY EASTER!** Did you know Easter is the second top-selling confectionery holiday behind Halloween? As many as 90 million chocolate Easter bunnies and 16 billion jelly beans are made for Easter each year.

# GAZEBOEXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • APRIL 2011



## FLOOD CONTROL PLAN

### HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND GRIFFITH FIRST RESPONDERS POOL THEIR RESOURCES TO PROTECT RESIDENTS FROM FLOODING

As Northwest Indiana begins to think about spring showers and, with them, a history of significant flooding, Highland, Munster and Griffith fire departments are banding together to fight back Mother Nature.

The three departments have long been partners in training to fight blazes that are simply too large for a single department to handle on its own.

"Our mutual aid agreements have been in place a long time," Fire Chief William Timmer said. "The training that we are doing now is to prepare in the event we have a breach in the dike, rains that overwhelm one or all of our communities or the need for search and rescue if someone runs into trouble on the trails that line the top of the dike. We all keep a close eye on the structure itself and don't anticipate a problem with it, but our job is to prepare for any eventuality."

In addition to training, Timmer said the three departments have an inventory of specialized equipment they are willing to share, such as different types of watercraft, bladder and barrier flood-control systems as well as machines that help fill sandbags.

First responders are trained to use all of the equipment to keep things running smoothly in the event of an emergency.

"Our job is to respond to any emergency and that includes rescues from the water. Sharing resources makes us all better equipped and better able to respond to any emergency," Timmer said. "We have more and more people using the dike for passive recreation. We know the kids are using it for sledding in the winter and going out onto the river, which can be very dangerous. These kinds of situations tend to be manpower intensive and this training helps everyone." 🌱

## HIGHLAND CANCELS MAY PRIMARY

Lake County Election Board officials have approved a request from the town to cancel the May primary election.

The Election Board and town officials began discussing the possibility of canceling the primary after election filings closed in February without a contested primary race.

That decision will allow the Town Council to bankroll an estimated \$32,000 that would have been spent on election-related expenses.

"We are thrilled county officials concurred with our belief that holding a 2011 primary was unnecessary and wasteful," Councilman

Dan Vassar said. "With the type of winter we just experienced, our first inclination is to transfer the \$32,000 into our street paving program to offset costs this summer."

Council President Brian Novak said the cancelled primary will give residents the opportunity to vote when it will matter most.

"We believe this is good government in action," Novak said. "This is about making the most of every dollar we have and being accountable to the citizens of our community to make decisions that maximize our resources." 🌱

### TEACHING AGREEMENT

A contract extension between the School Board and Highland teachers means there will be no layoffs this year. The agreement extends the current contract three more years.

Teachers overwhelmingly approved the agreement, which replaces first dollar medical coverage with a \$2,000 deductible for single employees and \$4,000 for families.

Imposing a deductible will bridge a \$1 million shortfall created when the state reduced funding to Highland.

### NEW RESTAURANTS

Bar 41 and Shrimp Max are coming to Ultra Highland Plaza. The new restaurants join Ultra Foods, A.J. Wright, Avenue, Big Lots and a host of other local businesses in the plaza located at the corner of Indianapolis Boulevard and Ridge Road.

### FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Six business owners have already applied to take part in the town's facade improvement program.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said there is still time and resources for additional businesses to apply.

The Redevelopment Commission has set aside \$100,000 and is willing to contribute as much as 30 percent of the cost of facade facelifts along business corridors throughout town. Priority will be given to buildings in the Downtown Redevelopment Area.

### TRAFFIC SIGNAL WORK

Midwestern Electric is inspecting every traffic signal in town.

The work is expected to be completed by the end of June at a cost of about \$12,000. The last time traffic signals were inspected to make sure they were all in working order was 2009.

## NATIONAL TAKE BACK DAY

Unwanted and expired medications will be collected from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 30 at the Highland Police Department, 3333 Ridge Road.

The collection is part of the second annual National Take Back Initiative launched by the DEA to remove unwanted medications. More than 121 tons of pills were turned in during the first Take Back Day in September.

Police Chief Pete Hohnicki said all forms of medication will be accepted. No questions will be asked. April 30 will also mark the day when residents may drop off unwanted guns and ammunition. Police ask that you unload the weapon prior to drop-off.

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-3184.

## YOUR COUNCILMEN



### WARD 1

**BERNIE ZEMEN**  
bzemen@comcast.net  
(219) 781-1056



### WARD 2

**MARK HERAK**  
mherak@highland.in.gov  
(219) 838-0126



### WARD 3

**DAN VASSAR**  
dvassar@highland.in.gov  
(219) 924-1945



### WARD 4

**BRIAN NOVAK - president**  
bnovak@highland.in.gov  
(219) 810-7810



### WARD 5

**KONNIE KUIPER**  
vice president  
kkuiper@highland.in.gov  
(219) 924-7820

## NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:



**GAZEBO EXPRESS IDEAS**  
c/o Highland Town Hall  
3333 Ridge Road  
Highland • IN • 46322

[gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com](mailto:gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com)

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“This will be an opportunity to see the potential of these vacant business locations while enjoying the works of local artists.”

# HIGHLAND TO HOST FIRST POP-UP GALLERY

Highland's Main Street Bureau is hosting the community's first ever Pop-Up Gallery and they are inviting the community to pop in. Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said the purpose of the event is three-fold:

- To showcase vacant storefronts in the hope of generating interest;
- To highlight the local arts community; and,
- To network with business owners in town.

“This is called a Pop-Up Gallery because it ‘pops’ up for one day in vacant commercial space and then it closes down,” Petro said. “I had heard about it and thought it would be a cool idea to bring to Highland. The members of the Main Street Bureau thought it was a great idea, too.”

It is an idea that has been gaining momentum in New York and Chicago as well as in smaller communities as a means of taking advantage of the recessionary real estate market to stage free exhibitions and showcase available commercial properties.

This will be the Main Street Bureau's first event. The Bureau is responsible to act as a catalyst for activities that will help revitalize



## THE EVENT

**WHEN:** 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, April 21

**ADMISSION:** The community event is free and open to the public.

**WHERE:** 2427 Ridge Road — Suites B and C — east of Walgreens in the commercial outlot next to Jimmy John's.

**INFO:** Call Cecil Petro at (219) 838-1080 for more information or future events.

downtown Highland.

Petro said, depending on its success, other events will be planned at other locations throughout the downtown.

“We will be inviting commercial realtors and business people and we want the public to come, too,” she said. “This will be an opportunity to see the potential of these vacant business locations while enjoying the works of local artists.”

All artwork on display will be available for purchase. 🎨

# TOWN EYES TWO NEW FIRE TRUCKS

When Fire Chief Bill Timmer started shopping for a new fire engine, he was hoping to find one reasonably priced truck.

Instead, he found two for the price of one.

“I believe we are getting the deal of the century,” Timmer said. “We went into this knowing we were financially constrained but we needed at least one new engine to replace equipment that had exhausted its useful life. We expected one fire truck would cost about \$500,000. This agreement means we will get two new fire trucks for \$250,000 apiece.”

The two trucks are demos with about 6,000

miles but have yet to see an actual blaze.

Warranties begin when they arrive in town.

“We were definitely in the right place at the right time,” he said. “We are very happy because we are saving taxpayers a lot of money. The second vehicle will replace a truck that had only one more year of useful life. The guys at the fire station will be happy because they will be working with new equipment.”

It will be easy to spot the new trucks — they will be red instead of yellow.

The Town Council is expected to officially purchase the trucks in April. 🚒

# Earth Day 2011

## HIGHLAND LOOKS TO IMPROVE RECYCLING NUMBERS AND UNIQUE WAYS TO CONSERVE STORM WATER

In 2010, Highland households recycled 464 tons of household waste — diverting more than 928,000 pounds of paper, plastic, glass and aluminum from landfills.

Those statistics do not include the tons of paper and aluminum recycled through church and school drop-offs.

Between the various initiatives, only 7 percent of all waste is being repurposed, well below the 33.8 percent national recycling.

Councilman Dan Vassar believes the town needs to do better.

“Certainly, our country is going in the direction of recycling more, not less, and we need to do the same,” Vassar said. “We need to take a close look at these numbers and figure out what we could do to improve them.”

Highland’s curbside recycling program has been in place for 20 years.

Looking at the best practices of other communities that mirror those of the country may be the best place to start. “We need to take a leading role in recycling and making the best use of our resources,” Vassar said.

As the community examines the need to recycle, Rex Burton, president of the Sanitary Board, said he hopes officials and residents begin to look at other options for recycling.

As the chief in charge of managing

### DID YOU KNOW?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that:

- The U.S. generated 243 million tons of municipal solid waste in 2009, down from 251 million tons in 2008.
- Of this, 82 million tons — or 33.8 percent — were recycled. That figure includes food scraps and yard trimmings that were recovered for composting.

the town’s storm water, Burton keeps a close watch on everything having to do with rain — how to manage it as well as how to conserve it.

Households creating a passive rain collection system would collect and then reuse rain water for sprinkling flowers and lawns. This could go a long way toward reducing the strain on the storm water system.

A moderate, one-inch rainfall on a 1,000 sq. ft. roof yields about 625 gallons of water. If most households collected that water instead of sending it into the storm sewers, clean water flow could be reduced by more than 5 million gallons during a single rainfall.

“Everything seems to indicate that this is a much better way to control fresh water. It seems so much better to use it to water our gardens than to send it down into the sewers.”

### ABOUT EARTH DAY 2011

A Billion Acts of Green® inspires and rewards both simple individual acts and larger organizational initiatives that further the goal of measurably reducing carbon emissions and supporting sustainability.

The A Billion Acts of Green® website quantifies acts of green through an easy-to-use online tool where simple individual gestures like riding a bike instead of driving may be recorded.

The goal is to register one billion actions in advance of the Earth Summit in Rio in 2012. Register yours at <http://act.earthday.org>

### PARK PRIDE DAY

Join the Highland Parks and Recreation Department for a community clean-up at our local parks. Join us afterward at Lincoln Center for a barbeque lunch and receive a free T-shirt!

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to noon **April 16**

**WHERE:** Main Square Park

**INFO:** Call Alex Brown for your park assignment at (219) 838-0114.

### THE GIFT OF GREEN

When landscaping your home, consider donating your unwanted trees to the Highland Parks and Recreation Department. Our crews will remove your established trees (trunk must be less than 4-inches in diameter) and fill in the area with black dirt. These trees will be transplanted to park areas to be enjoyed by all.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

### GIVE A GIFT, GET A GIFT

Groups and individuals are encouraged to help improve the Erie-Lackawanna Trail by donating benches, trees or flower planters. A plaque will be placed to honor your group or to identify the donation as a memorial. Donation options include:

- Flower Planters: \$1,500
- Recycled Plastic Bench: \$760
- Trees: \$250

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.





## SPRING ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR

The best in arts and crafts will be showcased at this annual spring show. The two-day event features jewelry, ceramics, fiber arts and more.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. **April 16** and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. **April 17**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-0114.

## PLAY BALL!

Opening day ceremonies for the 2011 Highland Little League season will feature Ronald McDonald and the 2010 Little League finalist teams.

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m. **April 23**

**WHERE:** Markley Park

**INFO:** Call Highland Little League President Dan Vassar at (219) 924-1945.

## POP WARNER SIGN-UPS

Register your child for fall Highland Pop Warner football or cheerleading. Must bring child's birth certificate, report and physical. Parents can pick child's number at registration — first come, first served. Adult jerseys with child's number can be ordered as well.

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **April 30**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**REGISTRATION:** Save \$10 at today's early registration.

**NOTE:** Dr. Nick will conduct on-site physicals for \$15.

**INFO:** Email Marcy Ramirez at [ramirez@highlandpopwarner.com](mailto:ramirez@highlandpopwarner.com), call (219) 808-7684 or visit [www.highlandpopwarner.com](http://www.highlandpopwarner.com)

## EASTER EGG HUNTS

**FOR ELEMENTARY:** Children ages 7 to 10 are invited to join in the fun, hunting for colored eggs packed with treasures.

**WHEN:** 11:30 a.m. **April 9**

**WHERE:** Sharp Athletic Complex

**INFO:** Admission is \$3/\$5 per child. There is a limit of 75 children. Register at Lincoln Center or by calling (219) 838-0114.

**FOR PRESCHOOLERS:** A special egg hunt for children too young to attend elementary school will be held at 10 a.m. **April 23** at Lincoln Center.

**INFO:** Call Joan Ray at (219) 923-6376.

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The Highland Lions Club will host its 66th annual pancake breakfast featuring pancakes, sausage, biscuits and gravy, juice, milk and coffee. Come for the food; stay for the raffles!

**WHEN:** 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. **May 1**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**COST:** \$6 adult (13+), \$3 child (6-12), \$15 family (2 adults, 2 children)

**INFO:** Call Susan Westerfield of Highland Lions Club at (219) 741-7749.

## CREATE YOUR OWN STORY

Visit the Highland Public Library during National Library Week and enter for a chance to win a Reader's Gift Bag.

**WHEN:** All day **April 11-16**

**WHERE:** Highland Public Library

**INFO:** Call Kathy Deal at (219) 838-2394.

## BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK

No Health Insurance? High Deductible? Healthchek offers affordable blood work. Basic profile includes complete blood count, metabolic and lipid panel for \$45.

**WHEN:** 9 to 10 a.m. **April 16**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**NOTE:** Fasting recommended. Drink water and take medications as directed.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## FIRST AID FOR PETS

Dogs and cats are more than pets — they're family. That's why the American Red Cross has developed Dog First Aid and Cat First Aid, a comprehensive course to help keep pets healthy and safe.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. **April 16**

**WHERE:** Prompt Ambulance, Highland Complex, 9835 Express Drive

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-4444.



Easter  
Bunny  
Breakfast!!

## TICKETS ONLY SOLD IN ADVANCE

**FOR TICKETS:** Tickets are \$5 and must be purchased in advance at these locations:

### CENTIER BANK

9102 • 9701 Indianapolis Blvd.

### FIRST FINANCIAL BANK

2611 Highway • 45th & Kennedy

### FIRST MIDWEST BANK

2842 Highway

### MICHAEL'S RESTAURANT

2040 45th Ave.

### LINCOLN CENTER

2450 Lincoln

### CHAMBER OFFICE

8536 Kennedy

## Meet and greet the long-eared star of the season

Join the Easter Bunny and his other furry friends for a continental breakfast. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the event also features a bike drawing at each seating, basket raffles and photos with the Easter bunny.

**DATE:** Saturday, **April 16**

**SEATINGS:** 8:30 or 10 a.m.

**LOCATION:** Highland High School cafeteria

**INFO:** Call the Highland Chamber of Commerce at (219) 923-3666.